

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for producing a spiral membrane element which comprises: the step of forming a multilayer structure comprising a membrane which has been folded, a feed-side passage material disposed on the feed side of the folded membrane, and a permeation-side passage material disposed on the permeation side of the folded membrane; the step of spirally winding at least the multilayer structure on a perforated core tube; and the step of forming a sealing structure for preventing the feed-side passages from being directly connected to the permeation-side passages,

the folded membrane being obtained by forming beforehand in a membrane a folding initiation part reduced in bending resistance along each of folding lines for the membrane, folding the membrane at the folding initiation parts, and heating and pressing the membrane during and/or after the folding.

2. The process for producing a spiral membrane element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the multilayer structure comprises a continuous membrane which has been pleated, a feed-side passage material disposed on the feed side of the membrane, and a permeation-side passage material disposed on the permeation side of the membrane, in which the folding initiation part has been formed only in each folding part where the feed-side passage material is to be sandwiched.